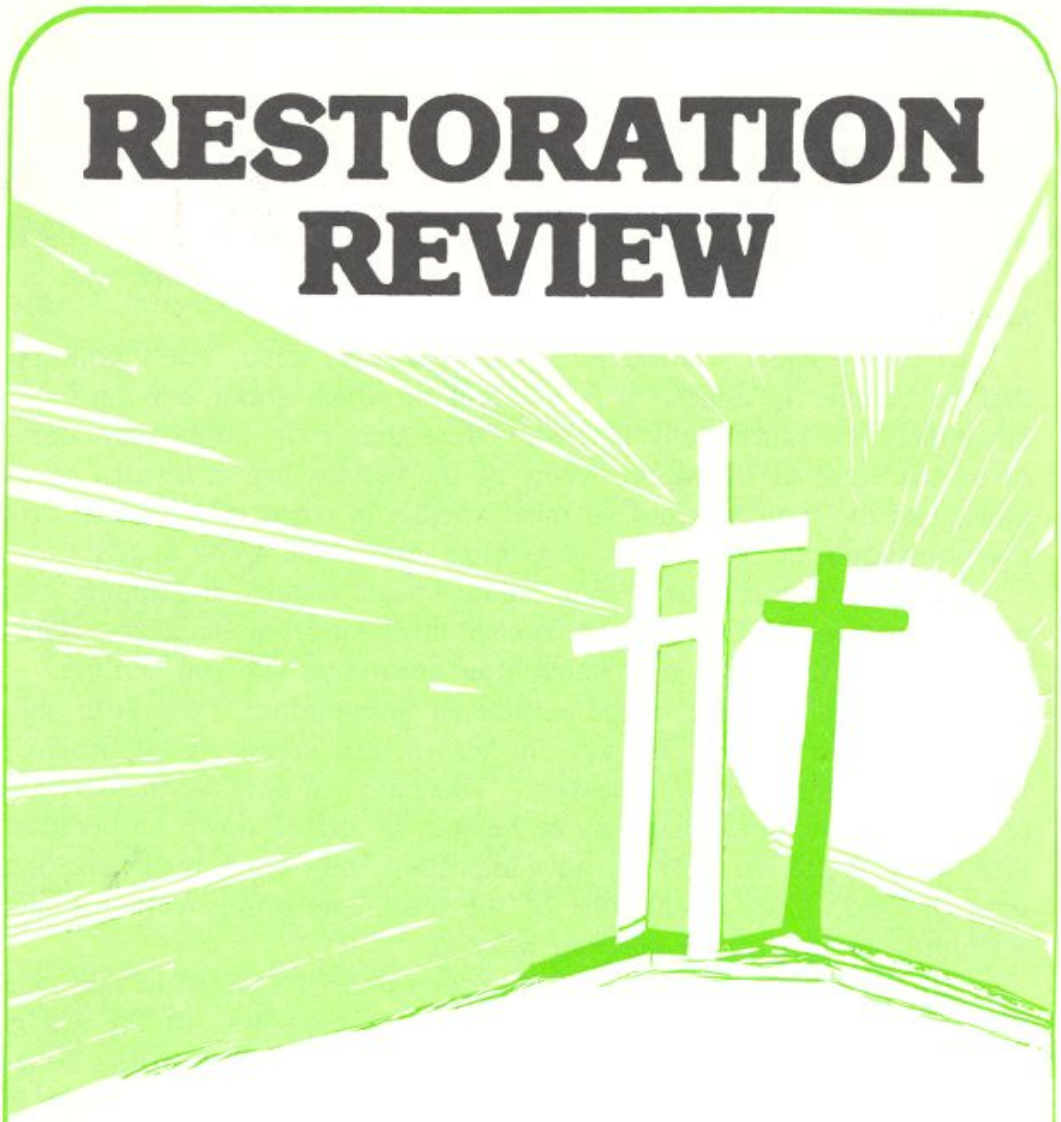
RESTORATION REVIEW



Nobody is going to heaven because he is correct on every doctrinal matter in Scripture. If this were the case, none of us would make it. I wish I could motivate my brethren to get as excited about evangelism (and unity and other divine imperatives) as they do about what can be done within and on the church (building) premises. Will I really have a better hope of glory if I refuse to eat a ham sandwich in the church house? — Steven Clark Goad, Firm Foundation, Jan. 11, 1983

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The Doe of the Dawn: A Christian World View. . .

THE SPIRITUAL (ANGELIC) UNIVERSE

See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven. (Mt. 18:10)

In our incendiary world it says a great deal about one's philosophy that he believes in angels. It is a world in which about one-third of its inhabitants are functionally illiterate. More than that number are starving or on the verge of starvation. Many of the nations live in distrust of each other, and the problems they all face, whether in terms of terrorism, drugs, overpopulation, or poverty, are staggering. And I talk about angels!

I am not referring to shining haloes, magic wands, or flapping wings, but to creatures of God, not altogether different from ourselves, *spiritual* beings, whose mission it is to watch after nonentities like you and me.

It is the nonentities, those considered unimportant, "the little ones," that Jesus refers to when he says "in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven." These are not only little children, but all those in the church that may be ignored or looked down on because of their lowly estate. In showing how important these souls really are in the sight of God, Jesus reveals one of the most comforting truths of all of Scripture: *we have angels watching after us.*

It is a truth that challenges one's values if he is inclined to take others for granted, whether the wearisome child, the paperboy, or the kid next door, and especially if he "thinks down on" those he considers beneath him, which is the idea of *despise.* Jesus is saying that that lowly black boy, unlearned and unkempt, has his own angel who stands in the presence of God himself, so you had better take care how you treat him.

We may seem to be outnumbered by the forces of evil in this complex and dangerous world, but once we see, as did Elisha, that "they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (2 Kgs. 6:16), we realize that we are on the side that cannot lose. It is a great line where Elijah prayed for the younger prophet filled with fear, the fear of overwhelming odds against him: "Lord, open his eyes that he may see." It was when Elisha saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire, an angelic host, that he could say *Fear not.* He had more on his side than he realized.

Ah, if we could but open our eyes and *see!* It is a fitting prayer for any of us in a world smitten by depression. And when we see what the Scriptures teach us, that there are angels "sent forth as ministering spirits" (Heb. 1:14), we need not be overcome by fear. It was this assurance that sustained Jesus in the face of his enemies: "Do you not think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels" (Mt. 26:53).

That the angels are innumerable adds to the aura of this neglected subject. The "twelve legions" that Jesus could summon would itself be 60,000, if we take this literally, but he was probably saying "countless numbers." It was "a multitude of the heavenly host" that sang praises to God at the birth of Christ (Lk. 2:13), and Dan. 7:10 counts the angels by the millions: "Thousands of thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand." It is enough to say that the angelic host is well staffed, or as Heb. 12:22 puts it there are "innumerable angels in festal gathering."

When Jesus referred to those twelve legions, he said they could be summoned "at once." We may conclude that these heavenly beings have spiritual bodies of some kind (just as we shall have), but they are capable of transcending both space and time and can thus transport themselves here and there as quickly as the mind can think, faster even than Superman! It is evident that they sometimes assumed human bodies (or it so appeared) but even then neither bars nor cages could contain them, as in the case of Peter's deliverance from prison. An angel passed through stone walls and iron doors to reach the apostle, who was asleep, chained to two soldiers. But he appeared to be a human being, nudging Peter on the side to awaken him and firing instructions to him. The apostle followed the angel out of prison, with iron gates opening before them as doors do in our supermarkets. It was only when it was all over that Peter realized that it was an angel that had pulled off the escape.

There is a happy blend of the natural and the supernatural in this story. Surely the angel could have swooped down, not unlike Superman, and bore Peter to freedom. But some elements are similar to any jail escape, such as the angel telling the apostle to get dressed and move quickly. Why, with an angel in charge? Throughout Scripture there is an economy or a conservatism in the miraculous. It took Jesus to raise Lazarus, but he tells those standing by to remove his burial clothes.

While the Bible does not refer to "guardian angels," the text for this essay allows such a deduction: each little one has an angel in the presence of God. While it is a blessed thought, this does not have to mean that one particular angel and that angel only is set apart for each person. For whatever reason, one may need the ministry of many angels, or perhaps different ones at different times. But Jesus does suggest that each little one has an

angel that has a special responsibility for that one person. This being the case, a lot of us must give our angel a hard time of it. Since they themselves are not beyond sin, I can see how they might grow weary of us --- and try to trade us off! And I suspect some of them could really be horse traders!

Speaking of the angelic proclivity to sin, it is evident from Scripture that some of them have transgressed just as man has. There are the *fallen* angels "that did not keep their own position but left their proper dwelling," and it says of them that "they have been kept by him in eternal chains in the nether gloom until the judgment of the great day." (Jude 6) This is the demonic world, or part of it, those angels, principalities, and powers that seek to separate the believer from the love of God (Rom. 8:38-39).

Satan himself is a fallen angel. Jesus says he saw him fall like lightning from heaven (Lk. 10:18), which means that his fall was quick, sudden, and final, not that Jesus saw him fall from heaven. Whatever this passage means, however poetic or symbolic, it speaks of the reality of Satan as a fallen spirit. Since Jesus spoke to Satan, now and again putting him down, we cannot conclude that all such references are but "picture-thinking" in an effort to describe the extent of evil in the universe, as some theologians suggest. They rather describe our enemy, a real and living reality, as in 1 Pet. 5:8: "Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour."

This passage names the devil, which means *slanderer,* as the *adversary,* which is the meaning of Satan. That describes our enemy: in the presence of God he is against us, continually making charges against us, accusing us, even of misdemeanors. Except for our advocate, who is the Christ, our situation is hopeless, for our accuser has the goods on us since we *are* sinners as charged. Our advocate concedes before the "court" that we are guilty as charged, but that he will take the penalty upon himself. It is the sacrifice of Jesus in our behalf that the Judge declares to us, even when we stand in the dock guilty, *not guilty.* Not guilty! This is the meaning of *dikaiosune* or righteousness, as it is usually translated.

So our accuser and adversary, the devil, named Satan, rules the spiritual (demonic) world, he himself having fallen from a high estate due to his hostile disposition and rebellion against God. His self-ordained mission is to oppose God's work on earth by deceiving man and destroying faith, such as entering the heart of Judas (Lk. 22:3) and removing the word of God from men's hearts (Mk. 4:15). He is sometimes credited for physical infirmities and deformities, as when Jesus describes a woman he was to heal, one bent over so that she could not straighten herself, as "bound by Satan for eighteen years" (Lk. 13:16), a doctrine that is dramatized in the book of Job.

But Satan's power is limited by what God allows him to do, as in the case of Job, and by what man is willing for him to do, as indicated in those admonitions to beware of him, such as Eph. 6:11: "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

This truth really comes alive in an exchange between Jesus and Peter. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren." The apostle is sure he will stand firm, for he responds: "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." That is when Jesus predicts that Peter will deny him not once but thrice and that before the cock crows (Lk. 22:31-34).

This shows that it takes more than a host of good angels and even the prayers of Jesus to keep Satan off us. The believer must be resolute and defy Satan, drawing upon the resources available to him. Jesus prayed that Peter's faith would not fail, but there was Peter's part. Peter came through the ordeal bruised and battered by Satan, but he was victorious. Jesus knew that the apostle's sifting by Satan would rough him up, but that it could also be used to help others. "When you have turned again, strengthen your brethren," he told Peter.

If Satan asked for Job and demanded to sift Peter, is he not out to hurt the faith of us all and in the most subtle ways? He uses wiles and tricks to deceive us, so we must always be armed with the armor of righteousness and protected by the shield of faith.

If we are in a war it is important that we know who the enemy is. We are slow to learn that the enemy is not those of another church, but "the domain of darkness" that forever tempts us through the false values of this world to compromise our faith.

But we have a lot going for us, very much indeed. But even when heaven is on our side and Jesus is praying for us and angels are standing by, it is in our hands to make use of the grace God has bestowed and the resources of power that he has laid by for us.

It is said of angels: "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?" (Heb. 1:14)

They are sent forth to serve and protect us. It should be a weighty part of the Christian's view of things. --- *the Editor*

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Highlights in Restoration History . . .

DEATHBED REPENTANCE

One of the lesser known preachers among our pioneers was one Alexander Graham. One is tempted to add *Bell* to that name, but he was just Alexander Graham, and he had such a reputation as a preacher that at his death Alexander Campbell referred to his "remarkable and eventful life" and the "irreparable loss" in having to give him up. These were the real heroes of our movement: those who did the work while not always recognized for it.

There is an interesting anecdote about Alexander Graham's last days. Realizing that the end was near, having suffered "the last bitter dregs of that horrible dyspepsia," he requested that his friends be brought into his room, one by one, so that he could have a last word with them. He took pains to dress up for the occasion. The girls of the school he taught in Marion, Alabama were among the first to be summoned, to whom he delivered "a calm and most lucid address."

One gets the impression that our pioneers took dying seriously and did it with style and drama. This was especially the case when brother Graham at last had his wife brought before him, addressing her in "the most affectionate and feeling manner." These chores all done, he requested that they allow him to die in peace and not prolong his life.

Among those summoned to his side was a Methodist preacher whom he had debated sometime earlier. "Brother Hammel," he said, "I consider you a gentleman and a Christian brother. We have differed, and, in the heat of discussion, something may have escaped me calculated to wound your feelings; but if so, it was unintentional."

Brother Graham went on to say to the Methodist divine: "We are both aiming at heaven, and agree as to the great fundamental principles of Christianity. I trust in Jesus Christ's blood for salvation. There is no other name given under heaven by which we can be saved."

This obituary notice, appearing in Campbell's *Millennial Harbinger,* reminds us that our heritage is not one of exclusivism, where we have little or nothing to do with other believers and where people of other churches are turned into enemies. Our forebears had no qualms about calling a Methodist minister "Brother" and accepting him as a Christian. Alexander Graham's sweet attitude is refreshing, speaking to us out of our distant past. He knew how to treat his wife with feeling and affection, and when the last hour came he bade her goodbye as one who knew where he was going, his last journey.

He wanted a final word with his Methodist brother, with whom he had some differences, even "heated discussions." Maybe some unkind word had slipped, so he wanted to make sure there was peace between them. "I consider you a gentleman and a Christian

brother," he said to his friend in the ministry, and how can there be more reconciling words than those?

Once the brother had his house in order, he wanted to be left alone, to die in peace with him who was waiting to lead him across Jordan. I like the anecdote, for it reflects the life of one who knew how to die because he had learned how to live.

Doubtless Alexander Graham had his convictions, and we can believe that he never compromised any truth he held. Yet he could practice forbearance toward those he believed to be wrong on some matters and accept them as equals in the Lord. We can be sure that Graham argued with his Methodist friend about baptism, even "heatedly," but this disagreement did not keep him from accepting him as "a gentleman and a Christian brother." Can we really be any other way and still take the claims of unity seriously? If unity means that we have to believe and practice alike on everything, including baptism, then there is no hope for unity. Graham accepted the Methodist minister on the basis of *faith in and loyalty to Jesus Christ.* If we make anything else the basis of acceptance, we lay down a doctrinal test that lacks scriptural grounds.

"Master, we saw a man who is not one of us casting out devils in your name; and because he was not one of us we tried to stop him," one of the apostles reported to Jesus (Mk. 9:38). We are often like that concerning those "not of us," and we too try to stop them or discourage them in one way or another. Like the vulnerable apostles, we tend to reject those who are not of our party and who do not march by our drumbeat.

We remember Jesus' response to this: "You must not stop him: no one who works a miracle in my name is likely to speak evil of me. Anyone who is not against us is for us."

We who claim such loyalty to Scripture sometimes see only what we want to see. While our Lord teaches forbearance and acceptance of those "not of us" when they are ministering in his name, we have a way of ignoring the word of God and go right on rejecting all those who are not "Church of Christ."

One fallacy in our rejection of others is that we magnify the difference between ourselves and other believers. There was not as much difference between the apostles and the one they found as they thought, otherwise Jesus would not have responded the way he did. They had only one reason for rejecting him: *he was not one of them!* This is usually our reason for rejecting other Christians, for all we know about them is that they are not "Christian Church" or "Church of Christ." We are slow to see that there can be differences and yet a mutual love for and commitment to our Lord. And is that not what it is all about? We can accept each other on the basis of mutual love for Christ, and whatever differences need to be discussed can be done *within* a fellowship of love and acceptance.

A good current example of what I am saying is the ministry of the University Church of Christ in Conway, Arkansas. Visiting in our home recently, the minister of that church told Ouida and me how they are enjoying a beautiful fellowship with other churches in their city, albeit other Churches of Christ will not fellowship them since they are accepting those "not of us." He has visited the pulpits of other churches, and their ministers have addressed his congregation. They can now talk together, pray together, study together --- as Christians should!

The time came when he had gained their trust that he shared with his fellow ministers his concern for the place of baptism. "You brothers trust me now," he could say to them," "Now I want you to tell me how you deal with these passages with your people." He gave them such texts as Acts 2:38, 1 Pet. 3:21, and Acts 22:16 to study so that they might make a response at a later date. He found them uncomfortable with this subject, but he lovingly urged them to let him know how they interpreted these Scriptures in their preaching.

While some of them balked and showed irritation, others came to terms with the matter in an honest way. Amusingly, one preacher had an "explanation" for all the verses except Acts 22:16, where Saul of Tarsus is told to "Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins." With resignation he said, "I just don't know what to do with that one."

The minister is right in sharing his passion for what the Scriptures teach about baptism with his fellow ministers, for the denominations generally handle this subject carelessly and inadequately. But he is also right in accepting his fellow ministers as Christians and brothers in spite of this difference.

And who is likely to place "our plea" before others, those like the Conway church, who create an atmosphere of loving acceptance and unity, or most of the rest of us who will have nothing to do with such folk until they line up and see things like we do? Which is more reconciling? Which is more in keeping with our plea for unity? Which conforms more to the spirit of Alexander Graham and our early pioneers? Which is more in keeping with our Lord's liberating principle of "He who is not against us is for us"?

We are not really free in Christ until we can accept all those who love him and obey him to the best of their understanding. This is the basis on which we desire others to accept us. If it is a matter of perfect faith and exact obedience (was your baptism perfect?), then who can really be called a Christian? --- *the Editor*

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AN ENCOURAGING "FIRST" FOR CHURCHES OF CHRIST

I say it is a "first," but it may not be. It is insofar as I know, and I find it encouraging, another indication that we are changing for the good.

The Cahaba Valley Church of Christ in Birmingham recently invited Krister Stendahl, professor of New Testament at Harvard, for a series of lectures, which included preaching at the Sunday a.m. service and sharing sessions with the congregation. This news item especially interested me, not only because I know that church and because Prof. Stendahl was my thesis director in my studies at Harvard, but also because I see it as phenomenal for our people.

We have been so exclusive a church that we "hear no evil, see no evil, and speak no evil" except in reference to our own folk. We hardly ever visit other churches, nor do we hear other ministers. We are so terribly inbred that we are seldom exposed to any new ideas except such as come from our own tribe. If someone is called in to "hold a meeting," you can be sure that he is a Church of Christ man, and oftentimes he must be of a particular breed within that fellowship. Only the daring ones among us read stuff other than what has been written by "a faithful member of the Lord's church," and fewer still dare to quote Barclay or Stott or Trueblood in a Sunday School class.

And for a Baptist or a Presbyterian to be invited to fill the pulpit. . .it is unthinkable. It simply doesn't happen, regardless of the ability or the spiritual depth of the man. I am persuaded that many, if not most, of our people would delight in such an experience, but they are denied the privilege. We are a deprived people, self-deprived, in that we cut ourselves off from much of the great resources of the church at large.

It was therefore significant when the Birmingham church invited a "liberal" theologian, a Swedish Lutheran (from Harvard of all places!) into its pulpit.

So interested was I in this turn of events that I asked my friend, Joe Black, minister of the church, to send me the tapes of Stendahl's presentations. Knowing that old Krister was also having a rare experience, I wanted to hear what he would say to a Church of Christ. The scene that conjured up in my mind --- a high church Lutheran, clerical collar and all ("I guess you think I'm dressed funny," he said to them) in a southern Church of Christ pulpit --- was almost too much for me. But from all indications it turned out very well indeed, *very nice*, as the professor likes to say.

Prof. Stendahl was impressed with our singing. "The congregation is the choir," he courteously observed in passing, "or the choir is the congregation." Tape after tape revealed how he opened up the Scriptures, providing helpful insights into the innards of the word, as Krister can do so well. He observed that it is important for us to realize that

there is much that we do not and cannot know. He told about the preacher who would describe hell as “the weeping and gnashing of teeth.” When he was asked about those who have no teeth, he replied, *Teeth will be provided!* The professor was satisfied that the divine did not really know that teeth would be provided!

In giving his views on Christian witness, he named his favorite Scripture: “Let you light so shine before men that they will see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Jesus did not say that they would thus be “converted,” but that they would glorify God. He sees the zeal of Christians in witnessing not always zeal for God as much as zeal for a sect and as often as not it is an ego trip. He is persuaded that the most effective witness is the quiet life that reflects the likeness of Christ, and he is suspicious of those who “pontificate about the lostness of everybody else.”

He thinks the church must be careful in “converting” Jews, lest more harm than good be done. He told of a Jewish girl whose parents died in the holocaust who was adopted by Christians. When she came to see the riches of her Jewish heritage, she concluded that she had lost something in becoming a “Christian.” In a treatment of Rom. 9-11, where Paul says so much about the Jews, Stendahl noted that the apostle does not call for a mission to the Jews. They will return to God, the apostle is assured, but in God’s own time and way, and not necessarily through Christian mission.

While it was unintentional, Krister relieved our premillennial brethren of the problem of the Scriptures ever referring to the church as Israel, which, if true, is embarrassing to their position. But Gal. 6:16 seems to do just that, and I have so understood it. Paul says, “Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God.” Following the Greek text, Stendahl sees Paul saying, “Peace on all who walk by this rule (the Christians), and mercy upon the Israel of God (the Jews).” I notice that Barclay gives a similar rendition. Krister insists that in the Scriptures Israel is always the Jewish people, never the church, but I am sure he could not care less how that might relate to the millennial issue.

He would now and again drop some of his philosophy which I recall from Harvard days. Being more realistic than pessimistic, he lamented that noble causes are often lost --- “love’s labor is often lost,” which many a parent, wondering what he or she did wrong, is likely to agree with. But still God is with us and that is what counts, he assured our people. He is not concerned about the secularization of society, but of the secularization of the church. “If you spend enough money, you can sell anything, even Jesus,” he complained, and he doesn’t believe in “selling Jesus like you sell toothpaste.”

It was kind of the church to present him a copy of my history of our people. Krister remembered his old student when Joe Black revealed that they had a friend in common, and I take it that his judgments were balanced. While he remembered me as somewhat different from the Harvard breed, he also recalled that I plied him with questions that sometimes reached beyond the subject at hand. Since he had taken the place of the old professor with whom I had done most of my work, Henry J. Cadbury, who did not believe in the deity of Christ, I recall asking him if he believed in the empty tomb. Maybe I shouldn't have, maybe it was none of my business. His answer was *yes,* to the extent that Harvard profs ever say *yes* or *no* to most any question. "There is no way to explain the faith of the apostles," he assured me, "except that there was an empty tomb."

But my favorite Harvard story about Stendahl is when one of his students, pressing him on what he believed about the resurrection, asked, "Suppose one had a Brownie that Easter morn and took a picture, what would the picture show?" Krister, undaunted, replied assuringly, "He would have a picture of the resurrection!"

Well, if one wonders whether those "liberals" at Harvard have any spirituality at all should hear Krister Stendahl pray --- in a Church of Christ in Birmingham! "You are so wonderfully, wonderfully great. We can never fathom the depth and the height and the breadth of your wisdom and grace. Deliver us from stifling worries about ourselves, the church, and about your work, and let us breathe deeply in faith. Thanks for the day. Cleanse what was dirty, and if You find anything worth the future. . .Goodnight, God!"

Goodnight, God! It must have been a blessing to all at the Cahaba Valley Church of Christ in Birmingham, a noble "first" in our long trek into the mainstream of the church catholic. While Krister was in the city, he lectured to medical students and a hospital staff on medical ethics, taking the imperative of the sanctity of human personality into the medical classroom.

More experiences like this will show us that we have nothing to fear in "coming within understanding distance," to use one of Alexander Campbell's phrases, with those down the street or uptown. The most important thing we learn is that we have far more in common with our Christian neighbors than we have differences. And if we are truly a unity people, will we not emphasize the commonality?

The plain truth is that we all have far more in common that we have been willing to admit. And we always grow when we get outside our fixed molds and sit down with those "strangers" who are actually our fellow pilgrims.

After all, we have one precious truth in common, the truth of the empty tomb. If the stone was never rolled back and if no angel could proclaim *He is risen!*, then nothing really matters anyway. But if we believe that the Christ is a living reality here and now, we have a precious fellowship to share --- from Cambridge to Abilene! --- *the Editor*

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RENEWAL THROUGH RECOVERY (3)

W. Carl Ketcherside

You will note that genuine renewal begins with proper respect for the apostles. It is renewal through recovery of the *apostolic* proclamation, purpose and power. This is the renewal for which we plead. No other will do for very obvious reasons. I hold no brief for the kind of teaching which assumes that the apostles were a group of antiquated fuddy-duddies whose teaching can be disregarded with impunity. The world has been led down a road of falsity by the infiltration of humanism and it stands a good chance of ending up in a bog or swamp where any attempt to extricate itself will only result in its sinking.

The one who was destined to be the king, called' his disciples to him, and out of their number chose twelve. He gave them authority, not only over the forces of nature, but over the forces of the supernatural. He specified their mission, gave them their marching orders and sent them forth against an alien and hostile world. Later, he recognized that they had first belonged to the Father who had given them to him out of the world. He gave them the words which God had given him and they received them. He had kept them in the Father's name. They were not of the world even as he was not of the world.

I deplore four notions about the apostles which I consider to be flaky. One is that they were simply products of their age, and subject to all of the mistaken ideas which are associated with any period. It is true they were in the world but they were not of it. They were not subject to the experiments, research and probing of their era, to test and arrive at truth. they were guided into all truth by the Spirit which was given them. All things that the Father had belonged to Jesus. And the Father took what was his and showed it to the envoys. Pay no attention to those who would try to sell you on the childish notion that the apostles did not know what they were talking about. No group of men could have produced the things they wrote without the inspiration of God. Any renewal worth the name begins and ends with the apostles.

Number two is the screwy idea that a special group of men, who like to dress like mother, and be called father, are successors of the apostles. This fabrication was dreamed up and developed in early times when men were simpler, to make it possible for the

hierarchy to manipulate men by making pontifical pronouncements which hold about as much water as an old-fashioned sieve. The apostles had no successors because they finished their work. They were like Jesus. He finished his work and sat down upon his throne. The apostles finished theirs and also sat down upon twelve thrones. They are still there. Some of the “bulls” which have been delivered in recent years are aptly named.

Number three is the proliferation of apostles by various cults. The worst offenders consist of those who are followers of the deluded imposter of the last century, Joseph Smith. He claimed to have found some golden plates hidden under a tree near where he lived. His informer was the angel Moroni, a clever invention. The plates were accompanied by two “peep stones” which he called the Urim and the Thummim. His mother, Emma Smith, said that he translated the book of Mormon by putting the stones in his hat and looking into them. Thus, Mormonism has the distinct honor of being the only system which came into existence by someone talking through his hat.

There are several divisions in the Mormon Church. One is in Utah, two are in Independence, Missouri, another in Lamoni, Iowa. The one in Salt Lake City is the Church of the Latter Day Saints. One in Independence is known as the Reorganized Church of the Latter Day Saints. The Temple Lot group in Independence might be designated the Disorganized Church of the Latter Day Saints. I could tell you things about all three of them which would cause you to die laughing, but since we do not have too many readers anyhow, I will desist. But one thing they all have is their own twelve apostles. Periodically these issue solemn pronouncements, geared to the developing climate of our society, as if God suddenly learned what was going on and moved to correct some of his mistakes in the Book of Doctrines and Covenants. In Utah they think the twelve apostles in Independence are false apostles. In Independence they think the twelve in Utah are false apostles. I think it is about the only thing on which all of them are correct!

The fourth thing that bugs me is the idea some groups have that one result of “the great falling away” is the absence of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. They are the only ones left who understand the will of God. All others see through a glass darkly. So they are to hold on by the skin of their teeth as the last great hope of mankind. They are but another example of the spiritual elite who have found the key of knowledge lost by the fumble-fingers of past generations. One of these days God will restore all of these functionaries and the faithful few will be vindicated and will go marching by the remainder of us, cackling in glee because we thought we knew God’s word, when we did not. But I hold there will be no more apostles. The twelve were unique. They will never have another group to take their place.

The twelve apostles are in authority now. This very minute! To receive them is to receive Jesus. To hear them is the equivalent of hearing Jesus. To reject them is to reject our Lord. There is no question but what we have lost the burden of their message. They were geared to the unity of all who believed in Jesus through their testimony. We have made a mockery and a farce out of that aim and ideal. Worse yet, we have given up on it. We do not believe it can happen. We must now revive it, or in this Space Age with its rampant and spreading unbelief, we will become so utterly pagan as to defy description. We must recapture their attitude, their motivation, and their spirit. Without these we will be powerless to weather the storm and withstand the gale which threatens us all.

Somehow, regardless of cost, or of suffering, tragedy and persecution, we must get the army of God marching again, and it must be against the foe and not in league with him. The twelve apostles knew that their primary relationship was with the unfailing Jesus and not with the fading word. They could distinguish between the wisdom from above and the wisdom of this passing age. And we must also learn this vital, stimulating, energizing truth. The apostles had one theme. They emphasized one person. He was the only one who could pardon from sin. He was the only one who could give purpose to life. He was the only one who could bring peace to a troubled soul. He was the only one who could provide power to conquer.

I suggest that all of my readers who have been troubled by fear of the lack of forgiveness, or by the drag of a purposeless life, or by a turbulent and riot-torn heart, or by a powerless existence, make a firm inner covenant right now to sit down and read carefully, deliberately and meditatively what the apostles wrote about Jesus. As his wish for your life becomes manifest, begin to implement the kind of life he would have you live. Your habits will change, your relationships will improve, your very life will take on new and deeper meaning. You can become a powerful force for transforming the world about you, God’s nuclear bomb in the midst of a decadent social order.

God needs dedicated persons. He needs committed persons. He needs those who have experienced the power of the purged life, who have been put through the eternal washer of the blood of Jesus, and cleansed by the only detergent which can do away with the black stain of transgression. That was what the apostles wrote about. These one-time fishermen, tax-collectors, and tentmakers, caught up in the Holy Spirit of God, penned for us the divine prescription for our condition. It came straight from the Great Physician who knows us better than we know ourselves. This is not only for the down-and-outers but also for the up-and-outers. It is for those in the poor ghetto but it is for the rich ghetto as well. It is for the one who never had a full meal and for the one who never missed one. It is for everyone. And it is for you. --- *139 Signal Hill Dr., St. Louis 63121*

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THE GOLDEN CITY

Robert Meyers

One night in 1945 I stepped off a train in a tiny Welsh village and asked directions to the U. S. Army hospital where my uncle was recovering from massive shrapnel wounds. Told that no vehicles would go that way before mid-morning, I decided to sleep there that night and rise early the next day to walk the eight miles.

An eerie fog draped the twisted branches of trees on the hills as I strode briskly along at five the next morning. I found myself in a world of writhing vapors where nothing seemed alive outside my small circle of vision. I remembered how I had already been alternately delighted on my trip by the pastoral charms of the Welsh valleys and fields, and appalled by the grimy ugliness of many of her cities. I remembered the great slag-piles, the blackened coal mining equipment, and the soot-darkened cities that seemed not to have been built with children in mind. I went on to see the uncle, who recovered and came back, as I did, to the United States. But I remembered Wales and the Carnaervonshire hills and great grimy Cardiff and the dirty little coal towns.

So when I read, years later, of a heartbreaking tragedy at Aberfan, a little coal town where a whole generation of children was wiped out in a few minutes, I was more than usually moved. Aberfan must have had some men who recognized the potential danger to her children from the great dark mountain of slag hanging over the town. Some must have spoken to The Company. But it would have cost so much to build a big retaining wall, or to move the pile, or to relocate the school. Apathy and greed decided to take a chance that nothing bad would happen. The rest is known.

One scene from the funeral, verbalized by a witness, remains etched on my mind. When the mass burial rites were ended, the families stood a final minute beside the open graves. Down by one of the lower trenches, a father knelt and pulled something from underneath his overcoat. It was a yellow Teddy Bear, soiled by long use in small hands. Looking around as if fearful that someone might see him, he dropped the Teddy Bear into the open grave and walked quickly away.

Such a tragedy always reminds us, if only briefly, how important our children are. The center of our hopes, the focus of all our dreams of a brighter tomorrow, we so often forget what they mean until they are gone. We miss many things about them, but one of keenest aches comes from our knowledge that now there will be no flesh-and-blood of ours to walk the world as better persons than we were. The hope that springs eternal in our hearts is blighted, the day turns dark.

The Biblical text chosen for that burial service was taken from Zechariah 8. There could have been no more appropriate one found, for the prophet in that place dreams of a Golden City where “the open spaces shall be full of boys and girls playing.”

Zechariah’s vision intrigues me, not least because it is one more in that long series of dreams which the Jewish prophets told in glowing poetry to their people. Keep faith, hold on, they promised, and one day the Golden City will rise from the ruins of Jerusalem and the Golden Age will begin. The mountains will sing with happiness, the trees will clap hands with joy, and the vines will hang heavy with luscious grapes. The whole earth will rest at peace, the lion and the lamb will lie down together, and from all over the world men will turn their heads and hearts hungrily toward Zion and the People of God.

It is a beautiful dream, and it touches my heart more deeply each passing year. It never came to pass, and we suspect that in its full and literal form it never will. Yet once we have been caught up by the dream, we cannot let it go again. It moves us to go on working for a better world, to hope for a city whose spires at least are touched by gold, even if its streets lie yet in shadows. The fact that it has not been fulfilled does not destroy the validity of the dream. It is part of that eternal hopefulness which alone makes human life possible.

Zechariah’s vision reminds me of that marvelous moment in Sean O’Casey’s drama, *Red Roses For Me.* A poet and dreamer named Ayamonn stands in the slums under a grimy bridge in Dublin when he is suddenly seized by a compelling vision of what the city might become. The stooped men and women around him slowly straighten and their faces become serene and noble as radiant light streams upon them. The city itself is transformed into a magical place of soaring spires and singing towers. On stage, and well produced, this wild and holy dreaming becomes almost unbearably poignant for the audience. What *could* be, we think, as contrasted with what is!

And once again the age-old dream of paradise, of heaven, of the Golden City, rises from some prophetic heart to make us unhappy with the common streets we walk in. Surely it is part of the Bible’s enduring value that it so often tantalizes us with the Dream. And who knows? Perhaps we shall yet live in beautiful cities where the air is pure and the very streets are filled with laughing children playing safely. The power of a dream is immeasurable and there are architect seers even now who envisage cities where, as Zechariah put it so long ago, even the aged may sit quietly and happily in the streets, staff in hand, unafraid in heart or mind. --- *338 Fairway, Wichita, Ks. 67212*

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A WISE WORD FOR CHURCHES OF CHRIST

I was heartened to read the following letter addressed to the editor of *Christian Chronicle*, published by Oklahoma Christian college for members of Churches of Christ, which appeared in said journal.

> Thank you, too, for being what you profess: "an international newspaper for members of Churches of Christ." Readers are clearly alerted as to the context in and for which you exist. That should also free you to acknowledge, when appropriate, information regarding other believers who serve the Lord Jesus, who do not happen to come from the same historical roots as our 19th century, American Campbell-Stone restoration movement. Since we clearly are not the only people God has in this world, readers should not feel threatened when somebody acknowledges any of the rest. And surely our own desire at the congregational level to be "a true church" does not succeed or fail on the basis of our ability to disqualify others who also strive for the same goal but happen to disagree with us on how to reach it.

This letter is all the more significant in that it comes from one brought up in the "Conservative" Churches of Christ, sometimes known as the anti-Herald of Truth persuasion. So it is a call for a more open posture from a product of our far right wing. When these brethren publish their list of heretics, Edward Fudge usually heads the list. I too make the list, but I do not rank like Edward since he was once one of them. He now edits *The Good Newspaper* in Houston, a periodical that deals mainly with church news generally.

His letter is a word fitly spoken. Nothing would so liberate our people if his advice were heeded. And it asks so little, and the request is consistent with the heritage referred to in the Stone-Campbell movement. Our pioneers launched a movement to unite the Christians in all the sects, which, if there were no Christians in the sects, was nonsense at the outset. So they wanted to be Christians only and did not presume to be the only Christians, and they did not claim that what they started was "the one true church."

So there is no reason, either from Scripture or from our own history, why we should remain exclusivists and ignore our brother's urging.

That brother Fudge's wise word is appropriate is abundantly evident, for our folk generally have the reputation of believing that we re the only ones that are right, or that we are "the restored church of the New Testament" and the answer to division is for everyone to conform to our way of doing and believing.

Even in the same issue of the *Chronicle* there is a gripping story of a man who was rescued from dope and crime to become a minister of the gospel. The story tells how a Church of Christ minister spoke to the judge about the man's conversion while incarcerated. The judge had seen jailhouse "conversions" before and he was skeptical. Then the writer says, "But he had never heard a preacher of the true gospel." That means of course, translated into our vernacular, that the judge had never heard a Church of Christ preacher before, which itself is unlikely since the judge sits in Texas.

It doesn't take much imagination to see how an attitude like that really turns people off. Our preachers are the only ones that preach the true gospel! It would be closer to the truth to say that those who presume to be the only preachers of the true gospel are the ones most likely to distort the true gospel. The apostle Paul seemed to suggest as much when he referred to those who "were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel" because they would not accept other believers as equals (Gal. 2).

This attitude has become such a part of us that we will overcome it and behave as Edward Fudge suggests only by repentance and studied effort. We should start by being ashamed of ourselves. We are at heart a magnanimous people, much more gracious than our exclusivism would suggest, and so we must show that magnanimity by reaching out to other believers as *equals* in Christ.

Edward speaks wise words when he assures us that we can be "a true church" without disqualifying other believers who happen to disagree with us on some things. There is nothing wrong in our believing that we are right, but there is something wrong in our believing that we are right and everybody else is wrong. The first is to be convinced and committed Christians, the second is to be bigoted sectarians.

The choice is ours, isn't it? --- *the Editor*

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BOOK NOTES

Johnson's Notes on the New Testament is probably the widest circulated commentary among Churches of Christ. It is with good reason that it has been kept in print through the years, for it is reliable and to the point. We can supply the two volumes in one for 12.95 postpaid.

Toby Drews' *Get Rid of Anxiety and Stress* is having an impact because it is a do-it-yourself manual for managing anxiety. Part of it tells one how to deal with phobias. 5.50 postpaid.

We have a limited number of otherwise out-of-print copies of *Recollections of Men of Faith* by W. C. Rogers. Originally published in 1889, the author knew personally the men he writes about, and these include Alexander Campbell, Aylett Rains. John T. Johnson, B. F. Hall, Jacob Creath, Jr. It is a goldmine of anecdotal history of our pioneers. 6.50 post-paid.

James D. North of Cincinnati Bible Seminary has authored *From Pentecost to the Present,* a short history of Christianity. If you want the story in a matter of 520 pages by a resourceful historian, we recommend this one highly. 18.95 postpaid.

If you are interested primarily in the early church (up to Augustine), we suggest one of our best sellers, the highly readable *A Short History of the Early Church* by Harry Boer, 5.50 pp.

And if you are not hysterical over so many historical references, we suggest one more, our own *The Stone-Campbell Movement,* by Leroy Garrett, at 21.95 postpaid. The response to this book on our own heritage is so positive !hat we are willing to offer it on a money-back guarantee. Several have ordered two copies, one to keep and one to lend. The borrowers would do well to have their own copy.

The remaining copies of *The Stone-Campbell Movement* by Leroy Garrett are now few, less than 200 copies, and it may be awhile before there is a second printing. If you are considering a purchase, you should order at once, and if you send a check for 21.95 we will pay the postage. And our offer of a free copy still stands, if you will send us eight new subs (or renewals, including your own) at 3.00 each, 24.00 total. We are pleased that a number have done this, thus introducing this journal to still more people.

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

Those who want to "rough it" in a glorious kind of way might attend the Macrorie family camp, July 28-Aug. 2, in Macrorie, Sask., Canada. The speakers this year are Rick Scruggs, Jim Phillips, and Doug Barrie, all from Canada, and Darrell Bolin of Lock Haven, Pa. Since I was present for this affair last summer, I can recommend it highly. It makes an ideal Canadian vacation, especially if you have a camper. For further information write to Greg Tweedie, Outlook Church of Christ, Box 97, Macrorie, Sask., Canada, SOL 2EO.

The Duke Street Christian Church in Kingston, Jamaica appeared on a Christmas stamp issued by that island nation. This church, which has 600 members, was founded in 1858. The red brick building, which was once destroyed by an earthquake, is a historic landmark in the heart of Kingston. There are 40 other Disciples congregations on the island, and they, along with Duke Street, will host the 1984 World Convention of Churches of Christ.

A historical marker in Dallas recognizes the Western Heights Church of Christ, founded in 1872 and disbanded only this year due to demographics (a debilitating modern heresy!). The marker, erected by the Texas Historical Survey Committee, notes that the church was founded by a Civil War general, Richard M. Gano.

If you think that it is only the young among us that will change, you have underestimated the power of the Spirit. James W. Russell, editor of *Outreach*, which circulates mainly among non-Sunday School, one-cup Churches of Christ, tells in an editorial how during World War Two he drew the line on a group of believers who was like his own, except that they had a teaching training program along with their Sunday service. "We refused to allow them to think they were in our fellowship until they dropped the teaching program," Jim explains, which they did eventually. In retrospect the editor, who has long been a peacemaker among his people, laments: "I was such a coward that I would not be physically or vocally involved but I did support those who did. We cried victory to the heavens when we succeeded in this terrible effort." The editor now cries out, *Drop the exclusiveness!* So the older ones can and do change, even older editors! That Jim reads cowardice into his behavior back in those days is worth underscoring. Cowardice may have more to do with our continued separations than we realize. Many know better. Many believe in more openness. But they dare not speak up. Why?

In a recent gathering in the White House with pro-life leaders, President Reagan asked a physician if the child does not feel pain in an abortion. "Isn't there actual cruelty involved, cutting a human to pieces, cooking them with acids?," he asked. The physician replied that that was precisely the case. The President then told the group, in righteous anger, that they were being too gentle with the issue. People who wouldn't abuse a kitten,

he commented, are taking human life. The President also stated that he believed in intercessory prayer and expressed appreciation when he was told that tens of thousands of believers pray regularly for him.

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READERS' EXCHANGE

I praise God for the work you have done in the Lord's vineyard. You and Carl have planted the seed of unity in diversity among Christians for many years, and I see the fruits of your labors. God gives the increase. The minister at the Church of Christ we attend said last Sunday before about 450 people that there are Christians among the sects. --- *Dallas Burdette, Montgomery, AL.*

The little Church of Christ didn't work out for us. Our membership with the Baptist brothers has been enlightening, enjoyable, and stimulating. I often think of Alexander Campbell's love for these people, and I now understand why. They are a very loving people. --- *Steve Burnett, Las Vegas, NE.*

I am a new subscriber to *Restoration Review.* I heard about it only six months ago. If you only knew what my family and I have experienced the past year you could see how encouraging it is to find that not only are there members of the Church of Christ who hold liberal views as I do, but there is even a publication. I can hardly believe it. Praise God! God bless you for your courage and boldness. I now have new hope for the Churches of Christ --- *Joe L. Patridge, Dardanelle, AR.*

It does not bother me that God has not revealed all he is going to do. I am content to believe that he will do what he intends to do whether I understand it or not. I am convinced that if I faithfully serve him he will cut me in on the celebration whether I knew in advance all the details or not. --- *W. Carl Ketcherside, St. Louis, Mo.*

I have a dream. I dream of the day when we, as the Church of Christ, can sit down together with Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians, and others regardless of their church affiliation, join hands in brotherly love and in unity pray to the God of all mankind for the good of all mankind. I dream of that Sunday morning when here at Southside a Baptist or Methodist minister might stand behind this rostrum and share with us our unanimous Savior Jesus Christ. . . I dream of the day when our hearts and minds will unlock the chains of legalism and traditionalism and that petty issues will be superseded by love, such as instrumental music, choirs, the observance of Christmas. Yes, Christ brought a new law,

the law of love. --- *Jerald Daughrity, Portales, NM* (excerpts from a sermon to Southside Church of Christ)

Each time we receive a letter there are at least a hundred more who would write if they didn't suppose they were too busy. I want some of my friends to have a chance to enjoy the paper so I am enclosing a list of 20 names. --- *John O. Kling, Paint Rock, TX.*

(If this subscriber is right, we could greatly increase our circulation if the others would do as he has done. Many of you can come up with at least four names of prospective new readers. We will send the paper to them for a year at only 3.00 per name, and you can include your own name for renewal. --- *Ed.*)

My son has just been ordered to work a split shift at the airlines where he works. This will prevent him from attending services either time on Sunday. While the saints are singing God's praises and studying the Word, he will be pitching bags on a plane. Now, since everything we do is worship (as you contend, as per Rom. 12:1), can we say that he worshiped as well as we? Only he pitched bags while we prayed and studied in the assembly. Now, you try that on for size and see how it fits. --- *F. I. Stanley, Crosby, TX.*

I wrote this dear preacher friend (we used to debate!) that *yes,* if his son pitches bags on a plane to the honor of God ("He who honors me, him will I honor") it is worship or service --- just as much as when he sings and prays. He could of course pitch and sing at the same time (not a pitchfork understand!). It fits just fine, right in with the New Testament, for interestingly enough prayer and singing are never referred to as worship, while pitching bags onto an airliner is! --- *Ed.*)

We have mailed *Jesus Today,* the bound volume of this journal for 1981-82, to those who reserved a copy. If you ordered a copy and did not receive it, please let us know and you will receive one straightway, with invoice enclosed. The cost is only 8.50, which is only 50 cents more than the price of the journal for two years. It is a handsome volume with matching dust jacket. With this volume in your library you can give your loose copies away. If you send us a check for 8.50 for the book, we will pay postage and handling.

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